will help to keep doctors and others in touch with the quickening pace of advance in reproductive physiology, a basic science which has already had a profound practical influence in the development of the "pill".

LIBRARIES

Who Reads What

A SURVEY of 104 technical libraries in the United Kingdom has now confirmed that people in universities and technical colleges make more use of their organizations' libraries than do people who work in government and industry. Moreover, this pattern of use reflects not so much the subject discipline as the nature of the institution (*Use Made of Technical Libraries*, Aslib Occasional Publication No. 2, 1969, 30s).

The authors of the survey, Margaret Slater and Pamela Fisher, have built up a series of user profiles for 6,300 people in a variety of institutions. Among other things, they conclude that most people use their technical library at least once a week, and that they are more likely to hunt out what they want for themselves than to ask the library staff. Textbooks are most often consulted, and then—in order—periodicals, abstract journals and indexes, handbooks and data books and, finally, dictionaries and encyclopaedias. Background reading and simple facts for immediate practical use were said to be the most frequently needed categories of information. More than half the users seem to have found useful results on their search.

Both government and industrial users seem to use libraries less frequently than people in academic or non-institutions—learned societies and research associations. They do, however, seem to use the library as a first resort more than the academic groups. Industrial users were especially interested in problems concerning equipment, sources of supply and the like, but these topics came low on the reading lists of government users. Keeping up to date was given less frequently as a reason for using the library by industrial users than by any other group except that of the academic users, and the report says that this may be because industrial libraries often have good circulation systems—for current journals and the like. Industrial users seem to ask for the help of a librarian more than any other group, and they also were more anxious for speed than academics and government workers. Industrial librarians seem to be coping satisfactorily, however, because only 3 per cent of the satisfied demands were described as "slower than convenient".

Academic discipline was found in the survey to have less relationship with user behaviour than, for example, the nature of people's work. Even so, out of the three groups—engineers, scientists and non-technical personnel—engineers were the least frequent library users and tended to go outside the resources of their own library more than scientists. Scientists made heavier use of periodicals and abstract journals and indexes than the others, but used textbooks and data books less frequently. On the whole, engineers seem to have more problems in getting information than scientists and non-technical users of technical libraries, and the report says that engineers, and particularly non-graduate engineers, merit special consideration and attention from librarians.

Parliament in Britain

by our Parliamentary Correspondent

High Energy Physics

THE Rutherford High Energy Laboratory employs 302 qualified engineers and scientists, and costs £7·387 million a year to run. Daresbury, on the other hand, employs seventy-four qualified scientists and engineers, and costs £3·5 million. These figures were given by Mrs Shirley Williams, who also said that the operation of NIMROD, at the Rutherford Laboratory, costs £2·283 million a year, and NINA, at Daresbury, costs £1·164 million. (Written answers, February 28.)

Fluidized Bed Combustion

THE inevitable questions about the development of fluidized bed combustion of coal have begun to appear. Mr Roy Mason told Mr Ashton that he was aware of the work being carried out at the British Coal Utilization Research Association. He added that he awaited the results of economic assessments "with great interest". His advisory council on research and development kept in close touch with developments, he said. (Written answer, February 28.)

Hovercraft

TOTAL research and development expenditure in support of hovercraft this year is expected to be £2·25 million. Mr J. P. W. Mallalieu, giving the figure, said that the National Physical Laboratory would spend £364,000 and the Royal Aircraft Establishment £45,000, and that extramural contracts would cost £1·8 million. (Written answer, March 3.)

European Airbus

MR ANTHONY WEDGWOOD BENN, Minister of Technology, said that his department was continuing its evaluation of both the A300B and the British Aircraft Corporation 3-11. The French and West German governments had been told of the proposals put forward by BAC. It was not yet possible, he said, to say what the decision of the governments would be. Hawker-Siddeley had carried out work worth £1·35 million so far on the airbus; 90 per cent of this work was relevant to the modified A300B. (Oral answer, March 5.)

Power Costs

MR ROY MASON, Minister of Power, said that the generating costs of Dungeness B power station should show no substantial change from the figures given on March 5, 1968. The generating cost would be 0·57 pence per unit. Drax, a coal fired station, would generate at a cost of 0·61 pence per unit. (Written answer, March 5.)

Computers

TOTAL Government support for computer research and development will be just over £9 million this year. Mr Jeremy Bray provided the figures, which show that the largest sum, £7·133 million, is in grants and contracts awarded by the Ministry of Technology, the National Research Development Corporation and the Science Research Council. This includes a £4 million research and development grant paid to ICL under the terms of the computer merger arranged last year. Of Government establishments, the National Physical Laboratory, with a budget for computer work of just over £1 million, spends the most. (Written answers, March 3.)